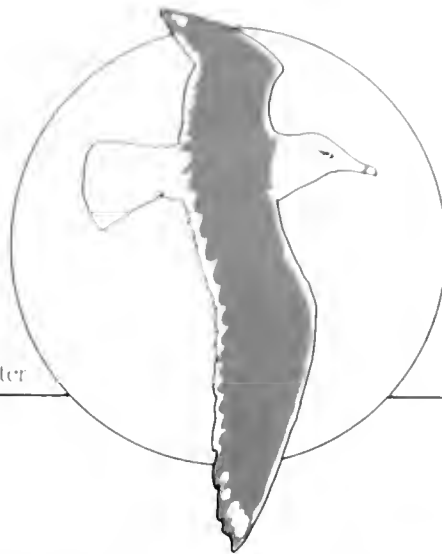


the Gull

Golden Gate Audubon Society Newsletter



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Volume 35 No. 6 June 2000

GGAS Goes To Court: The Bank Swallow And The Bay Itself Are At Stake!

By Arthur Feinstein, Executive Director

No one wants to go to court, but sometimes it's the only option in our efforts to preserve what's left of our natural world. In the last month, we have had to go to court twice.

East Bay Conservation Committee News

Jacqui Smalley

At our April meeting, GGAS's Conservation Committee heard a presentation by GGAS member Patty St Louis about the oil spill March 4 at Clinton Basin in Oakland. The spill resulted when the Port of Oakland failed to follow proper procedures during the demolition of a ship. St Louis shared photographs of the damage done at the site. Many birds were seen inside the spill area that had been contained by booms, and grass along the shoreline was damaged from petroleum residues. The cleanup was slow and incomplete.

Clinton Basin is a small remaining remnant of natural shoreline and should be preserved and protected from future damage. Yet, the Port has repeatedly caused pollution of the waters and shoreline at Clinton Basin, and it will continue to do so unless there are consequences. Please write to the Regional Water Quality Control Board, Executive Officer Larry Kolb, 1515 Clay St, Ste 1400, Oakland, CA 94612 and ask the board to levy fines against the Port for its role in the spill.. Such fines could be used to hire a biologist to determine necessary measures to clean up and restore the site and to cover the costs of restoration.

The next East Bay Conservation Committee Meeting is on May 8 at 7:30 pm in the Berkeley office. Hope to see you there. Contact me at: phone & fax (510) 655-6274 or e-mail: smalleyj@pacbell.net.

The Fort Funston Bank Swallows

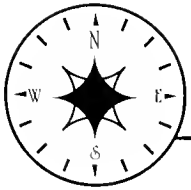
The Bank Swallow is listed as a threatened species under the California Endangered Species Act. Only 2 successful nesting colonies remain on the entire West Coast. Happily, 1 of these colonies nests in the cliffs of Fort Funston, which is located in San Francisco and is part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA). The Bank Swallows burrow into the sides of the cliff face (really sandy bluffs) to form their nests.

For years, GGAS's own Dan Murphy has been leading the charge to protect this Bank Swallow colony. Thanks to his efforts, the GGNRA has stopped the practice of letting people set off fireworks right under the colony on the Fourth of July, and he convinced the GGNRA of the need to fence off that part of San Francisco's Ocean Beach located right under the colony.

One of the ongoing problems at Fort Funston is that it is 1 of the most popular sites for dog owners to take their dogs to let them roam unleashed. This has resulted in significant erosion of the sandy bluffs and can threaten the Bank Swallows when dogs and owners get too close to the cliff's edge. Unleashed dogs also pose problems for other bird species, for example, the Western Snowy Plovers that reside on the northern part of Ocean Beach.

In 1995, the GGNRA closed off part of the Fort Funston cliffs to unleashed dogs because of the threat to the Bank Swallows. As years went by, however, the Bank Swallow colony moved in a southerly direction along

Continued on page 6



Field Trips Calendar

Friday–Sunday, June 2–4, YOSEMITE'S BIRD LIFE.

See April Gull for details.

Leader: Dave Quady (510) 704-9353. \$ (*)

Sunday June 4, STRYBING ARBORETUM.

See May Gull for details. Leaders: Allen Ridley and Helen McKenna (415) 566-3241.

Thursday June 8, POINT REYES NATIONAL SEASHORE.

See May Gull for details. Leader: Ken Burton (415) 669-1847.

Saturday June 10, HAYWARD SHORELINE.

See May Gull for details. Leader: Bob Lewis (510) 845-5001, e-mail: Rlewis0727@aol.com.

Wednesday June 14, MINI-TRIP TO REDWOOD REGIONAL PARK, Oakland.

See May Gull for details. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510) 351-9301 and Jean-Marie Spoelman. \$ (*)

Saturday–Sunday June 17–18, YUBA PASS, SIERRA VALLEY.

See May Gull for details. Leader: Peter Allen (415) 892-8063. (*)

Saturday–Sunday June 24–25, EASTERN SIERRA & WHITE MOUNTAINS, Inyo County.

See May Gull for details. Leader: Rusty Scalf (510) 666-9936, e-mail: rscalf@jps.net. Reservations needed.

Friday–Sunday, June 30–July 2 LASSEN VOLCANIC NATIONAL PARK, Shasta County.

See May Gull for details. Leaders: Dan and Joan Murphy (415) 564-0074, e-mail: murphsf@worldnet.att.net.

Sunday July 2 STRYBING ARBORETUM, San Francisco.

Meet at 8 am at the front gate of the

Arboretum (9th Ave and Lincoln Way) for this regular first Sunday of the month half-day trip. The Strybing Arboretum is a delightful section of Golden Gate Park, with several "microhabitats" attracting a varied array of resident, migrant, and vagrant birds. Beginners and all others welcome. Leaders: Allan Ridley and Helen McKenna (415) 566-3241.

Tuesday July 4, FT FUNSTON, LAKE MERCED, San Francisco.

Meet at 7:30 am on the observation deck below the Cliff House to check out Seal Rocks, where Western Gull, Brandt's Cormorant, and Black Oystercatcher have nested during recent years. From there, we will drive south to Fort Funston to see the Bank Swallow colony. We will finish the trip at Lake Merced, where we should see nesting Cliff Swallows, Double-crested Cormorants, and perhaps Great Blue Herons. Beginners welcome. Leader: Dan Murphy (415) 564-0074, e-mail: murphsf@worldnet.att.net.

Saturday–Sunday, July 29–30, YOSEMITE ALPINE ECOLOGY, Tuolumne County.

Snow conditions at the time of this writing make selection of any specific location for this year's outing impossible. However, expect a full day's hike in the high country on Saturday and a shorter hike, returning to our cars at about 3 pm, on Sunday. Due to its popularity, this trip will be by reservation only, and the number participating will be strictly limited. This is not primarily a birding trip, but will emphasize general alpine ecology. All participants should be in good physical condition, with reasonable experience in hiking and climbing at elevations of 8,000 to 11,000 feet, where we will be. Each day you should bring lunch, ample fluids, hat, water repellent jacket, sunscreen, mosquito repellent, and

good walking shoes or boots with treaded soles (no smooth-soled tennis or other shoes, please). We will possibly be traversing snow fields after the heavy winter snows in the Sierra.

County and Forest Service campgrounds are located between Tioga Pass and Lee Vining off Hwy 120 (4–6 miles west of Hwy 395), as well as Tuolumne Meadows Campground in Yosemite. Motels in Lee Vining include Best Western Lakeview Lodge (760/647-6543), Gateway Motel (760/647-6767), and Murphy's Motel (760/647-6316). For trip reservations and meeting details, call Leader: George Peyton (510) 433-2600 weekdays. \$ (*).

Friday–Monday, August 25–28, BACKPACKING TRIP IN LASSEN VOLCANIC NATIONAL PARK.

We will backpack in 3 miles to Snag Lake and spend 3 nights in primitive camping by a stream near a large meadow. We should see flocks of mixed warblers and other songbirds that summer in Lassen, plus resident birds of the mountains, Bald Eagles, and perhaps some migrating shorebirds. We will be above 6,000 ft elevation in beautiful country! To avoid impact in fragile habitat, this trip is limited to 12 people. Everyone will be responsible for his/her own gear and food, although some cooperative or shared meals may be arranged. Leaders: David Rice and Robin Pulich. For details, contact David Rice at (510) 527-7210 or drice@jps.net.

Trips marked with a (\$) go to parks or other sites that require an entrance fee. Carpooling arrangements will be attempted by leader for trips marked with (*).

Problems, etc: If you need information and have difficulty reaching a field trip leader, call Anthony Fisher, Field Trips Committee Chair, (510) 658-8769, e-mail: Loveisant@aol.com.

If you don't have details from the May Gull for some of the field trips, consult the GGAS Website at goldengate.ca.andnubn.org.

GGAS Receives Grants to Support Important Conservation Programs

We have been fortunate to receive foundation and corporate support for our programs in the East Bay in environmental education, habitat restoration, and endangered species advocacy. The Golden Gate Audubon Society (GGAS) gratefully acknowledges these gifts made since January 1, 2000:

The GGAS East Bay Environmental Education Project received \$27,500 under a new joint initiative—the Youth in Wilderness Project—of the Sierra Club and the Sierra Club Foundation to expand outdoor learning for disadvantaged youth. GGAS will use the grant to support its interactive field-based environmental education program, which was launched 9 months ago. The program targets 4th graders and high school students in East Oakland. A total of \$650,000 was awarded for 34 projects, all offering quality outdoor learning opportunities for low-income youth in Northern California. “The competition for funding in the first round was fierce. Choosing the best of the best was quite challenging,” according to Jackie McCort, Youth in Wilderness project coordinator. “I met up with one of the GGAS field trips at the Martin Luther King Jr Regional Shoreline and watched the kids explode off the bus with joy and excitement to be at the wetlands. Observing the students work with the excellent team of outdoor educators, I knew that this program would work. Youth in Wilderness offers enthusiastic congratulations to Audubon and the talented staff and volunteers who ensure a stellar outdoor learning experience for these students.”

The Bank of America Foundation awarded \$5,000 to GGAS for environmental education programs in Oakland and Alameda. GGAS was 1

of 3 Bay Area recipients of the bank's Catalyst Grant Program awards.

“Bank of America believes environmental protection is an integral component of doing business in today's world. In conjunction with Earth Day, we thought our Catalyst Grant Program would be a perfect opportunity to reaffirm our pledge to protect the environment,” said Lynn E. Drury, President of the Bank of America Foundation. Nationwide, the Foundation awards \$250,000 on a quarterly basis to nonprofit organizations, focusing on a different theme each time.

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, under its Refuge Support Group grant program, awarded \$5,000 to the GGAS education program at the Alameda National Wildlife Refuge. This is the second year GGAS has received this award, which will be used to expand the popular Alameda curriculum. More activities will be developed for the 3rd-grade flight adaptations curriculum, and each class will be visited twice instead of once. Also, the 4th-grade ecology curriculum will be refined in response to evaluations from teachers and students. Finally, Friends of Alameda Wildlife Refuge will design and pilot a new curriculum component focused on the effect of environmental toxins in San Francisco Bay. This addition will add a third visit to the participating 4th grade classrooms.

In support of advocacy to clean up toxics at the Alameda NWR and secure adequate federal appropriations for operations and maintenance of the refuge, GGAS received grants from both the Weeden Foundation (\$15,575) and the San Francisco Foundation (\$14,000). The grants will fund an independent peer review of studies characterizing hazardous wastes found in and around the

Donations

Least Tern (\$200 or more)

Ann M. and Harlan Richter

Gifts (to \$99)

Joell Buffa (Save the Quail), Vicki Tiwari (Save the Quail), Siobhan Ruck, M. Jean Richmond (Bird Box)

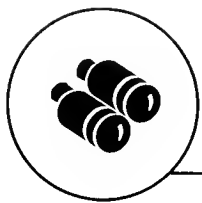
In Memoriam

Mr and Mrs Gerald Filippi in memory of Helen Maria Abraham, Mr and Mrs John Newton

The Society Welcomes gifts in general or gifts in honor of or in memory of relatives and friends. Such gifts will be used as specified by the donor or, if unspecified, at the discretion of the GGAS Board of Directors. This includes their use of general GGAS activities or for special programs of the Society. Please send your gift in the form of a check made out to Golden Gate Audubon Society, 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G, Berkeley, CA 94702. All gifts are tax deductible. The Society is also appreciative of any bequests. Such bequests should specify as recipient the Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. All gifts, donations and bequests will be acknowledged in *The Gull*, as well as personally on behalf of the Society by the Secretary.

largest wetland on the refuge and organize informed public input to promote timely and thorough cleanup. A landfill containing the hazardous wastes is directly adjacent to the largest wetland at Alameda NWR and home to nesting colonies of Caspian Terns and Western Gulls. A portion of the Weeden Foundation grant will be used to support advocacy to secure federal appropriations for endangered species protection, including predator control and monitoring and protection of the California Least Tern. (A request for \$859,000 has the full support of Senator Dianne Feinstein, Senator Barbara Boxer, Representative Nancy Pelosi, and Representative Barbara Lee. It is currently awaiting consideration by the Interior appropriations subcommittees in both the House and the Senate.)

This report was prepared by Dana Kokubun, Program Director, Friends of Alameda Wildlife Refuge



The Orange-crowned Warbler

Because I bird “watch” with one ear tuned in, it occurred to me that springtime is not actually here until I hear the first Orange-crowned Warbler’s song. Somewhere near the first of March, I hear the rather weak or thin downward trill of this bird. The song arises from the midst of newly leafed trees and shrubs. Being adorned in somewhat drab feathers, this warbler closely resembles a leaf. I look, mostly in vain, for this elusive small bird.

The best view I ever had of an Orange-Crowned Warbler was on the Lafayette Reservoir main trail. The bird was singing his heart out from a branch slightly below the path. Because male and female resemble each other, the fact that it was proclaiming its presence almost assured me that it was a male staking out its territory. Warblers rarely sit still so that I expected him to tantalize us before darting out of view. Instead, he was intent on defending his space and/or impressing a mate.

The warbler family is large: 56 species in North America. Only the large finch family has more members. Warblers are often gray, olive, or green, but many are brightly patterned with bright yellow, orange, red, blue, or black and white. They are true pains in the neck because many spend their lives in treetops, forcing us “peepers” to strain to see them. Almost as elusive are the few varieties that live and nest near the ground. As is usual with bird species, there is no “usual” warbler! They are busy birds, flitting about trees or thickets while actively seeking insects. But seek, and you shall be rewarded. Warblers are the butterflies of the bird world.

I’ve never witnessed a distraction display among warblers, but it is apparently common to many of them. This is a practice that many bird species use to distract any threatening animal, man or beast, as they attempt to lure it away from the bird’s eggs, nest, or its young. Warblers use the

old injured bird routine. I doubt that they can vie with the Academy Award level acting job of the Killdeer as it feigns a broken wing, screaming in anguish as it flops on the ground. Other good acting jobs include the swan dives from branches by Wrentits, and the Green-tailed Towhee, which mimics a ground squirrel, its tail feathers fanned out to resemble a furred tail. Other birds try to look like voles or mice running through the grass. Ground-nesting birds with large numbers of precocial chicks to monitor are particularly good at the wounded bird trick.

Orange-crowned Warblers are less impressive than some of their cousins, but I find them to be handsome in their own rights. The bird is 4 1/2 to 5 1/2 in long and is plain—no wing bars or other distinctive marks. Even its orange crown is really brownish orange and is rarely visible unless the bird is agitated or courting. It is merely a dusky olive green above and greenish yellow below.

Why do I care about such a “blah” bird? I happen to find its constant trilling very sweet as it moves among the oaks and grease brush. AND it means that spring is finally here. In addition, the bird is another of those amazing natural “insecticides.” As the warbler constantly moves, it is gleaning leaf-hoppers, scale insects, aphids, caterpillars, flies, and spiders from the boughs. To spark its diet, it will also savor tree blossoms and an occasional berry.

According to my Peterson book of Western birds, the Orange-crowned Warbler is found in the Bay Area all year round. Perhaps they are here in small numbers in wintertime and aren’t obvious because they aren’t announcing their presence with song. Instead, they are quietly cleaning up any overwintering insects. While many warblers are parasitized by Cowbirds, this family isn’t one of them, for which I am very glad. Cowbirds are one of the reasons Bachman’s Warblers have become so rare in the Midwest.

Listen and look for the Orange-crowned Warbler this summer, along with the Yellow, the Yellow-rumped, and the Wilson’s Warblers as well as the less common Black-throated Gray and Hermit Warblers, the Common Yellowthroat, and the Yellow-breasted Chat. Let a little color into your lives!

Protect Our East Bay Parks

By Jacqui Smalley

In last month’s *Gull*, we suggested that GGAS members keep their eyes and ears open while strolling through their favorite places in the East Bay Regional Park District. With summer coming on, perhaps even more of you will be visiting the parks, particularly now with the countryside alive with birds and greenery. Please be vigilant and notice whether changes are occurring and whether habitat is being infringed on or streambeds trampled. We are continuing efforts to develop a more organized program to protect our parks. Please contact me if you are interested in becoming involved. Contact me at: phone & fax (510) 655-6274 or e-mail: smalleyj@pacbell.net.

Thayer's Legacy

By Harry Fuller

Thayer's Gull and the Surfbird are both winter residents of the Bay Area coastline. Both birds breed in the Arctic north of the 59th parallel. They also share a thread of human connections that includes 2 Bay Area birders. That thread began with John Eliot Thayer (1862–1953).

Thayer was the son of a Boston banker, Nathaniel Thayer, whose name graces a building at Harvard University. The elder Thayer also funded some of the expeditions by Harvard's Louis Agassiz. Young John graduated from Harvard, married, and moved to Lancaster, Massachusetts. There on the family farmland, he built a home near the Nashua River, a tributary of Thoreau's beloved Merrimack River. He rarely strayed from there throughout his life, even complaining when he had to travel 35 miles into Boston.

In the 1890s, Thayer became interested in local birds. He and his eldest son would spend hours afield collecting birds and eggs. Soon his collection needed a home, and Thayer hankered after more exotic species. He, too, began to pay for expeditions, first to Mexico and then to Alaska. Thayer, of course, never left Lancaster, but he had a museum built there to house his bird collection, which was open to the public.

By 1913 the Bay Area biologist, Joseph S. Dixon (1893–1952), was a veteran Alaskan bird collector. While still an undergraduate at University of California, Berkeley, he had gone twice to Alaska on expeditions led and paid for by Annie Alexander, who founded and funded the university's Museum of Vertebrate Zoology. After he graduated, Dixon worked at the museum in Berkeley. In 1913, Dixon led a group of Harvard gradu-

ates sent to Alaska under the patronage of John Thayer. The other scientist was W. S. Brooks of Harvard. The whole expedition nearly perished after their ship got trapped in ice along Alaska's north coast. That was September 3rd. While trapped on the shore of the Beaufort Sea, Dixon collected hundreds of birds, including a pale gull with pink legs. When the ship got free of ice in the summer of 1914, the men returned south. Back at Harvard, Brooks compared the pale gull with others already in the Harvard collection, labeled at that time "Kumlein's Gulls." The earlier specimens had come from Ellesmere Island. Brooks decided they were all representative of a new species and named it for the expedition's sponsor: *Larus thayeri*, Thayer's Gull.

The controversy over this species continues. Kenn Kaufman in his *Lives of North American Birds* says, "It is closely related to the Iceland Gull, and the two are sometimes very difficult to tell apart; they may be only forms of the same species."

Dixon returned to Alaska, first in 1919, then again in 1926. This expedition was also backed by Thayer. Dixon took along a young Bay Area man, George Melendez Wright, who was still an undergraduate in biology at UC Berkeley. It was Wright who fulfilled Dixon's dream of finding the nest of a Surfbird. The coastal areas of Alaska had proved fruitless, and Dixon had wisely chosen to look upland where the natives had long claimed the Surfbird could be found "in mosquito time." The Surfbird was one of the last North American breeders to have its nesting habits discovered.

On May 28, 1926, a thousand feet above timberline on Mount McKinley, George Wright found

Surfbirds and tracked one to its nest and eggs. It was the first ever seen by a scientist. Wright and Dixon watched the nest for more than a day, taking photos and movie film. They even saw the male Surfbird chase away a Dall's sheep that wandered too close. Finally, they killed the bird and took the eggs. Those specimens are now in the Harvard Museum of Comparative Zoology, where all of Thayer's extensive collection went after his death in 1933.

Dixon went on to a long career as a teacher; leaving UC Berkeley in 1931, he went to the Yosemite School of Field Natural History, run by the National Park Service. Many of his Alaska observations and publications were cited by A. C. Bent. Wright (1904–1956) also worked for the park service in Yosemite. With inherited money, he paid for and organized the first wildlife surveys in US national parks. He was well known among the conservationists of his day, being an early proponent of habitat and environmental restoration at a time when tame deer and bears were considered the ideal. He led the park service to protect endangered species and fragile habitat. While serving on the first international wildlife commission with Mexico, he was killed in an auto accident. His pioneering work is carried on by the George Wright Society (www.georgewright.org).

So Thayer's legacy extends from Harvard to Berkeley to Alaska to the National Park Service, and his expeditions added greatly to the depth of knowledge about shorebirds breeding in Alaska. All this from a man who never saw California or the Pacific Coast of North America.

GGAS Goes to Court...

Continued from page 1

the bluffs, and this year the GGNRA felt the need to close off a new section of the cliffs. They also closed off part of the bluffs further removed from the cliff face to allow for native dune plant revegetation. The dog owners were infuriated by this act and immediately sued the GGNRA.

We could not allow this suit to go without taking some action. If the dog owners were completely victorious, it might threaten the GGNRA's ability to manage its lands for endangered species. As a result, we engaged the help of the California Environmental Law Project (CELP). Its lawyers, Larry Silver and Kelly Drumm, requested that GGAS be allowed to intervene in the suit. An intervenor, if allowed to join the suit, becomes a full party to the suit, and any settlement decisions must be approved by the intervenor as well as by the original plaintiffs and defendants. We were allowed to intervene, and our lawyers submitted testimony and briefs to the court with the help of Dan Murphy, who was also asked to submit a host of material relating to the long history of GGAS and the Bank Swallow colony. Ultimately,

both sides seem to have won part of the case (although this article is being written before any final decision has been handed down).

The actual suit by the dog owners was limited to whether the GGNRA should have announced the closure before the act by listing the action in the Federal Register and requesting written public comments. This is a required step when new federal regulations are being created. GGNRA argued that such a step was not necessary for a management decision such as this (as opposed to creating a new federal regulation). However, the judge seems to agree with the plaintiffs that federal law also requires a Federal Register notice if a management action proposed for a national park is a controversial action. The dog owners claimed this action was controversial, and GGNRA claimed it wasn't. We supported GGNRA. Judge William Alsup, in a preliminary statement, has clearly sided with the dog owners on this subject and will in all likelihood require the GGNRA to publish such a notice.

However, the Judge also stated that "[T]he extent to which all or any

part of Fort Funston should be closed for that worthwhile purpose is committed to the sound discretion of the National Park Service." We hope this means that the GGNRA will be able to keep intact the beach closures once it publishes this intended action in the Federal Register. We will let you know what happens. Hopefully, our presence in the lawsuit helped clarify for the judge the importance of the closure for the survival of the Bank Swallow. We offer tremendous thanks to CELP for their pro bono work on this case.

Bay-Delta Diversions

How many of you are aware of the fact that at times the San Joaquin River flows backwards? It's sadly true. Thanks to the extensive plumbing system that directs California's waters, the San Joaquin River is pumped essentially dry at times (to send water south and to agriculture—80% of California's water is used by agriculture), and seawater rushes upstream to replace the river's freshwater flows, thus resulting in this

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Raven Research at ACR —by John Kelly, ACR Biologist at Cypress Grove Preserve

Recent dramatic increases in Common Raven (*Corvus corax*) in the San Francisco Bay Area have coincided with more frequent observations of ravens in heron and egret nesting colonies. In 1998 Great Egrets at ACR's Bolinas Lagoon Preserve suffered severe nest predation by ravens. Most nests were lost or abandoned, and only 30 young egrets successfully fledged, compared with 100 to 150 in other years. In 1999 ravens destroyed fewer nests, possibly because they failed in their own nesting

attempts. These and other observations around the Bay Area suggest an urgency to understand the threat of raven predation to waterbird colonies.

Last year ACR, in collaboration with the Point Reyes Bird Observatory, launched an investigation into the breeding and foraging ecology of the Common Raven, with emphasis on predatory behavior at heron and egret nesting colonies in the northern Bay Area.

Continued on next page

GGAS Goes to Court...

Continued from page 6

backward flow.

The freshwater flowing from the Sierras down the Sacramento River to the San Francisco Estuary is also redirected south and east by huge pumping plants, thus significantly reducing the amount of freshwater that flows each year into Suisun, San Pablo, and San Francisco bays.

The result has been the listing, as threatened or endangered, of many fish species that are dependent on these freshwater flows, including many salmon species, the Delta Smelt, and others. It has also significantly altered Suisun Bay's tidal brackish marshes (marshes that develop in water environments that are part salt- and part freshwater), turning these brackish marshes into tidal salt marshes and thus threatening the many species that inhabit brackish marshes. These species include river otter, snowy egrets, several species of ducks and the Suisun Song Sparrow, along with several plant species that are listed as threatened or endangered.

In 1986, GGAS was the lead plaintiff in a lawsuit against the State Water Resources Control Board

(SWRCB), seeking to reverse this trend and to restore freshwater flows to the bay. Out of this lawsuit came the Bay-Delta Accord and the CalFed process, which is supposedly going to solve these problems (we have grave doubts).

In 1995, as part of the Accord (to which we were not partners), the SWRCB issued Water Quality Standards for the Bay-Delta. These standards included requirements to double winter run Chinook Salmon populations and to fix the problem with Suisun Bay. These standards did not go far enough, but at least they were a step in the right direction.

This year the SWRCB issued Decision 1641 (D-1641), which was a document that was supposed to implement the 1995 Water Quality Standards by telling various water-rights holders how much water they could receive each year. In theory, some of them would have to get less water for there to be additional water for the Bay and Delta and our natural world. Sadly, but not surprisingly, the SWRCB failed to gather the nerve to offend water-rights holders. In particular, D-1641 fails to take any

measures to double the winter run Chinook Salmon population, nor does it take any action to ensure the survival of the brackish marshes and all of the wildlife dependent on those marshes, in Suisun Bay.

GGAS as lead plaintiff, joined by Marin and San Joaquin Audubon Societies, the Friends of the Mokelumne River, and the California Sports Fishing Association, has sued the SWRCB to correct these failures. Our attorney is Stephan Volker, who was so successful in our previous litigation against the SWRCB.

We'll keep you informed of the progress of this suit as we go forward. Freshwater flow is an issue that will never go away in California. It is the lifeblood of our estuary, and we will fight for it as long as we can. You can help us in this struggle. Litigation costs money, and we can always use your support. If you wish to help us out, please send your donation to Golden Gate Audubon Society, 2550 San Pablo Ave, Suite G, Berkeley, CA 94702. Thanks.

Raven Research...

Continued from page 6

Preliminary results from radio telemetry of ravens in West Marin revealed that breeding ravens often occupy small home ranges. Road surveys conducted last year by ACR volunteers indicated that ravens concentrate along the outer coast and in some urban/suburban areas and have a patchy distribution throughout the region. Many heronries in the region were not disturbed by ravens in 1999, but it was clear that some specialized on heron and egret populations.

This season, ACR biologists are radio-tracking

ravens and studying their behavior at heronries where raven activity is frequent, such as the nesting colonies at West Marin Island and ACR's Picher Canyon. The work at Picher Canyon will augment a related investigation of "conditioned taste aversion," a potential management technique that uses illness-producing prey to alter nest predatory behavior. Results of the study will address fundamental ecological questions about ravens and provide information for management options for colonial nesting waterbirds.



March 31–April 29, 2000

The spring weather throughout the period was beautiful, with just a few days of lingering showers. Songs of breeding birds such as Black-headed Grosbeaks, Orange-crowned and Wilson's warblers, and the call of the Olive-sided Flycatcher gladdened this birder's heart. Although a few more unusual wood warblers were seen than during the last period, the major influx of spring migrants definitely had not begun, and only 1 California Bird Records Committee review species was reported.

Albatross to Ducks

The Laysan Albatross continued its annual visit to Point Arena, MEN, Apr. 2 (GS). This may be the latest date for this individual. Seen offshore from Eureka, HUM, Apr. 15, were 124 Black-footed Albatross (ABB). A Manx Shearwater (*Puffinus puffinus*) was found during a seawatch from Pigeon Point, SM, Apr. 23 (RT). Unusual within the San Francisco Bay was a Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel near Point Isabel, CC, Apr. 6 (ES). This bird appeared to be ill or starving. A female Least Bittern was reported at Coyote Hills Regional Park, ALA, Apr. 14 (AF), and another individual was found at the

Consumnes River Preserve, SAC, Apr. 26 (JTr). Two wintering Greater White-fronted Geese were still along San Lorenzo River, SCZ, Mar. 31–Apr. 25 (MT-L, DB, DSu). Up to 3 Ross's Geese were at Zmudowski State Beach, MTY, Apr. 10–20 (MPRBA), as many as 18 of this species were at Arcata, HUM, Apr. 12–14 (ABB), and another individual was at Spreckles Lake, SF, Apr. 16–23 (KM, RF). Three single Eurasian Wigeons were reported from separate locations: off Hwy 84, SOL, Apr. 4 (RM), at Bolinas Lagoon, MRN, Apr. 11 (LS), and a continuing bird at Salt Pond A1, Mountain View, SCL, Apr. 11 (BR). A male Tufted Duck was on the Redding Sewage Ponds, SHA, Apr. 1 (BY), and another bird continued from Feb. 15 on Bolinas Lagoon, up to at least Apr. 11 (LS). The female Tufted Duck first reported in the Oakland CBC lingered at Lake Merritt, ALA, through Apr. 28 (MEz). A pair of Harlequin Ducks was near the Richmond ferry dock, CC, Apr. 7 (MR), and another individual remained in Monterey Harbor as of Apr. 20 (MPRBA). Two Oldsquaws (aka Long-tailed Ducks) flew by Pigeon Point, SM, Apr. 1 (RT), and another was off Tomales Point, PRNS, MRN, Apr. 11

(BBr).

Raptors to Skimmers

Uncommon on the coast, a light-morph Swainson's Hawk was south of Half Moon Bay, SM, Apr. 9 (RT), and another light morph was seen near the Pajaro River, SCZ, Apr. 25 (DSu). Rare on the coast in April, a Prairie Falcon flew over the UC Santa Cruz Arboretum Apr. 18 (MS, JS). Four to 5 Pacific Golden-Plovers were in their usual location near the Spaletta Ranch, PRNS, MRN, Apr. 6–18 (FB). Up to 30 Red Knots were at Marina Bay, CC, Apr. 26 (LJP), and 2 were observed at the Albany Mudflats, ALA, Apr. 27 (ES). Two Rock Sandpipers continued off Miramontes Point Dr, Half Moon Bay, SM, Apr. 1–9 (SAr, TC, DN), and 1 was seen there Apr. 10 (HH). A Solitary Sandpiper was at Orick, HUM, Apr. 22 (ABB), and an alternate-plumaged Stilt Sandpiper was at the Palo Alto Flood Control Basin, SCL, Apr. 16 (PM). Some Heermann's Gulls were reported to be exhibiting nesting behavior at Seaside, MTY, on Apr. 14 (MPRBA). This species had their first successful northern California nesting at that location in 1999. A 2nd-year Glaucous Gull was sighted along Alviso Slough Trail,

A (Red-Faced) Correction

As many of you noticed, and kindly brought to our attention, the ibis in Dr Collin Murphy's article on "Opportunistic Birds Down Under" was mistakenly identified as an Australian White Pelican. For the record, the bird illustrated in the April *Gull* is an Australian White Ibis, also known as Sacred Ibis, which

was photographed scrounging food at a snack shop in a Sydney park.

While in Australia, Dr Murphy heard a funny story about this species. The Sydney park department devised new trash cans to discourage pigeons. These cans had lids with small round openings. It didn't take long for the ibises to discover

these openings, and soon, with their long bills, they were removing food scraps that were ultimately shared with the pigeons! It seems this bird was also clever enough to find its way into Dr Murphy's story!

Our apologies to Dr Murphy and our eagle-eyed *Gull* readers.

SCL, Apr. 23 (PM). An early return of some Elegant Terns to Zmudowski SP, MTY, was reported on Apr. 19 (MPRBA). One Arctic Tern was with Forster's Terns at Hayward Regional Shoreline, ALA, Apr. 24 (BRi). Last year an Arctic Tern hybridized with a Forster's Tern at that location, so it will be interesting to see if that activity is repeated. Up to 2 Least Terns were at Capitola Beach, SCZ, Apr. 24-28 (DSu), and the first Least Terns of the season to return to their colony at the soon-to-be Alameda National Wildlife Refuge, ALA, were sighted on Apr. 29 (MR). Two Black Skimmers flew by Black Point, and Lighthouse Field, SCZ, Apr. 13 (DSu, NW). Up to 6 Black Skimmers were found in their usual location at Charleston Slough, SCL, Apr. 16-22 (PM, FT), and 1 other bird was reported from Hayward Regional Shoreline Apr. 24 (BR).

Owls to Kingbirds

A Northern Pygmy-Owl, unusual so far south, was found in Capitola, SCZ, Apr. 27 (DSu). Some Black-chinned Hummingbirds were seen off Bethel Island Rd, CC, Apr. 25 (FB). Two male Costa's Hummingbirds were west of I5, STA, Apr. 3 (FB), and up to 3 individuals were along Del Puerto Canyon Rd, STA, Apr. 22-27 (FT, FB). The 10 or more Calliope Hummingbirds found at Mount Diablo SP, CC, Apr. 15 was a good number (AW). Hammond's Flycatchers were reported from their usual spring location in Mitchell Canyon, Mt Diablo SP, with 1 found Apr. 1 (MF), and up to 3 seen there Apr. 15&24 (AW, LC). Four other Hammond's Flycatchers were at Smith Creek Ranger Station, SCL, Apr. 10-22 (MRo). A very cooperative Tropical Kingbird was seen at Hayward Regional Shoreline, ALA, Apr. 12-19 (SJ, PD, MF, MOB). The Tropical Kingbird first reported at

Lake Merced, SE, in early January continued as of Apr. 27 (RF, JT). Interesting was a report of 37 Western Kingbirds flying past Coyote Point, SM, during a 45-minute period on Apr. 21 (RT). Wood Warbler reports were slightly increased from the last period (see chart), and a Blackpoll Warbler seen in Watsonville, SCZ, Apr. 26-27 may be the earliest county record, possibly the earliest for northern California, according to DSu. The Summer Tanager first seen Mar. 26 in Tilden Regional Park, CC, was still present as of April 2 (AK, GF, MF).

Sparrows to Orioles

A Clay-colored Sparrow was near Hwy 113 along the Sutter Bypass levee, SUT, Apr. 2-6 (JSt). Two Grasshopper Sparrows were found in Del Puerto Canyon, STA, Apr. 3-27 (FB), 2-3 were on Meiss Rd, SAC, Apr. 29 (EG), and another was in Garin/Dry Creek Pioneer Park, ALA, Apr. 17 (AF). One Swamp Sparrow was at the Sunnyvale Water Pollution Control Plant, SCL, Apr. 23 (PM). Two White-throated Sparrows visited a yard in Santa Cruz County March 30 (MS), and single birds were reported from Arcata, HUM, Apr. 12 (EE), in the Presidio, SE, Apr. 15 (JC), near the UC Santa Cruz Arboretum, SCZ, Apr. 18 (MS, JS), and at Freshwater, HUM, Apr. 25-26 (ABB). The Harris's Sparrow first seen Mar. 12 continued at McKinleyville, HUM, Apr. 9-14 (ABB). The Dickcissel first found in Santa Cruz Mar. 12 was still in the area on April 1-12 (BB, ME, BR, MOB). A male Great-tailed Grackle flew over Soquel, SCZ, Apr. 8 (DSu), and some remained at Roberts Lake, Seaside, MTY, Apr. 14 (MPRBA). A pair of this expanding species was seen at Shadow Cliffs Regional Recreation Area, ALA, Apr. 28, near where a pair (the same pair?) nested in 1999 (MF).

Wood Warbler Sightings

Nashville Warbler

Apr. 7	Natural Bridges SP, SCZ	AKo
Apr. 10	Smith Creek Ranger Station, SCL	MRo
Apr. 10	Pinnacles National Monument, SBT	AlI, SE
Apr. 15	Rodeo Gulch Rd, Soquel, SCZ	DSu
Apr. 15	Mt Diablo SP, CC	AW
Apr. 16	Arcata, HUM	ABB
Apr. 24	Mt Diablo SP, CC	LC
Apr. 22 (5)	Smith Creek Ranger Station, SCL	MRo
Apr. 27	Capitola, SCZ	DSu

Palm Warbler

Apr. 13	Moss Landing, MTY	JD
Apr. 19	Princeton, SM	CM
Apr. 28	Carmel R Lagoon, MTY	MPRBA

Blackpoll Warbler

Apr. 26-27	Watsonville, SCZ	MB, BS, DSu
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Black-and-white Warbler

Apr. 5-7 (con't from Mar. 5)	Mountain Lake, SF	RF, KM
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American Redstart

Apr. 8-13	Reichmuth Park, SAC	KG, SA
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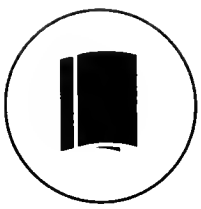
Abbreviations for Observers:

SA, Steve Abbott; SAr, Stephanie Arthur; ABB, Arcata Bird Box; BB, Bonnie Bedzin; FB, Florence Bennett; DB, David Bockman; MB, Marj Bourret; BBr, Brandriff Bob; TC, Ted Chandik; LC, Les Chibana; JC, Clark Josiah; JD, Judy Donaldson; PD, Peter Dramer; ME, Mark Eaton; SE, Scott Edwards; EE, Elias Elias; MEz, Ezekiel Mike; MF, Mike Feighner; RF, Rich Ferrick; GF, George Finger; AF, Anthony Fisher; EG, Ed Greaves; KG, Kevin Guse; HH, Hugh Harvey; AH, Amber Hensley; SJ, Sheila Junge; AK, Alan Kaplan; AKo, Anna Kopitov; MOB, Many Observers; KM, Kevin McKereghan; PM, Peter Metropulos; CM, Carol Miller; MPRBA, Monterey Peninsula Rare Bird Alert; RM, Roger Muscat; DN, Dick Norton; LJP, Lina Jane Prairie; MR, Mark Rauzon; BR, Bob Reiling; BRi, Bob Richmond; MRo, Mike Rogers; BS, Barbara Scharfenstein; JS, Jeff Scott; MS, Michelle Scott; JSt, John Sterling; GS, Grace Steurer; LS, Lang Stevenson; ES, Emilie Strauss; DSu, David Suddjian; JT, June Tern; RT, Ron Thorn; FT, Francis Toldi; JTr, Trochet John; MT, Monte Tudor-Long; AW, Alan White; NW, Nancy Wiemer; BY, Bob Yutzky.

Abbreviations for Counties and Others:

ALA, Alameda; CBC, Christmas Bird Count; CC, Contra Costa; HUM, Humboldt; MRN, Marin; MEN, Mendocino; MTY, Monterey; PRNS, Point Reyes National Seashore; SAC, Sacramento; SBT, San Benito; SF, San Francisco; SM, San Mateo; SCL, Santa Clara; SCZ, Santa Cruz; SHA, Shasta; SOL, Solano; STA, Stanislaus; SP, State Park; SUT, Sutter.

An Orchard Oriole graced Natural Bridges SP, SCZ, Apr. 8-10 (AKo, DN, MPRBA).



Writing and Gardening with a Wild Heart; Restoring California's Native Landscape at Home

I had a pocket full of Lupine seeds I was eager to propagate. Lupines are among the best plants to create habitat for California Quail, and my first attempt at growing lupine was a total failure. To be propagated at home, many native plant seeds need special treatment, such as refrigerating, boiling, scraping, or treating with strong chemicals. Which was the right treatment for lupine? In the quest to solve this quandary, I discovered *Gardening With a Wild Heart; Restoring California's Native Landscapes at Home* by Judith Lerner Lowry.

Gardening With a Wild Heart is not completely a "how to grow a garden" book. Rather, Judith Lowry has written a more important book, one on how to think about our gardens and their relationship to our environment. The reader is taken on forays into natural habitats to collect seed, watch birds and butterflies, or just lie

among the cream cups. Through careful observations of plants and animals in the field, we learn their intricate relationships and how these relationships can be applied at home.

As a result of a story in the *San Francisco Chronicle* on the California Quail, I received calls from people all over the Bay Area who wanted to know how to create quail habitat in their yards. At that time, I suggested people read *The California Quail* by A.S. Leopold and had initially planned to write a review of that book for this issue. But wait! I urge people to read *Gardening With A Wild Heart* first. Judith Lowry writes: "For a number of reasons, I garden for quail: historical (they used to be here in the thousands), aesthetic (is there a prettier bird than the California Quail?), and emotional (such sweet home loving creatures). Counting back-yard quail is a way I have of reassuring myself, like counting rosary beads, that

things are still somewhat okay." This is only one of Lowry's wonderful insights to the natural world, of our yards, and beyond.

I highly recommend *Gardening With a Wild Heart; Restoring California's Native Landscapes at Home* to anyone who is fortunate enough to have a small piece of earth they call a garden. This book is also of value for those of us who are gardenless but who are concerned about how our public lands should be managed to save our precious native flora and fauna.

Gardening With a Wild Heart; Restoring California's Native Landscapes at Home was published by the University of California Press in 1999.

Alan Hopkins is President of the Golden Gate Audubon Society. He has been leading the attempt to save the California Quail population in the Bay Area.

Tennessee Hollow Riparian Corridor Restoration Project

The Tennessee Hollow Riparian Corridor Restoration Project was first outlined July 1994 in the General Management Plan Amendment for the Presidio of San Francisco. The Urban Watershed Project began planning and advocacy work for Tennessee Hollow in 1996.

Doug Kern, environmental planner and UWP director,

will present the riparian restoration concept and the numerous challenges faced by the project at the SF Natural History Series talk on Thursday, June 22, 7:30 pm at the Randall Museum. For more information, please call (415) 554-9604.

News From Audubon Canyon Ranch

By Betsy Stafford

Bolinas Lagoon Preserve

June... fledgling time for both homo sapiens graduates and full-feathered avian species. The heronry is full of ready-to-go Great Blue Heron chicks (about a dozen), babbling Great Egret chicks (about 50 in all stages of childhood development), and late-arriving, gurgling Snowy Egrets (5 or more nests). Please join us for the ever-changing show in our Picher Canyon. Public season runs every weekend day through July 9th, 10am - 4pm. Our Ranch Guides, 20 of whom fledged in March 2000, are ready to assist you at our 2 overlooks, ponds, and trails. And many thank-yous to the wonderful chapter volunteers who are weekend hosts during the season.

Our award-winning Docent School Program starts its biannual training in September. Orientation dates are May 31 and August 30. Please call our ACR office at (415) 868-9244 for more information. You, too, could fledge

next spring with an amazing wealth of natural history knowledge and eagerness to share it with 4th and 5th graders.

Bouverie Preserve

Twenty-two newly-fledged young Juniper graduates are busy mentoring their peers on docent field trips to Bouverie Preserve. These junior naturalists, chosen for their special interest in natural history, completed a 5-week course with our docents. They also accompany docents on Bouverie's popular Guided Nature Walks. Don't miss a chance to wander the beautiful trails of our Valley of the Moon preserve. Fall dates for one of these walks are September 16, October 14, November 11, and December 9. Call (707) 938-4554 for a lottery form to register for a walk.

Farallon Islands and Tufted Puffins Trips Set

Golden Gate Audubon Society and Shearwater Journeys are offering trips to view the Farallon Islands Sunday, August 20 and 27. The special GGAS members-only price is \$59-nonrefundable.

We will depart from Sausalito aboard the "Salty Lady" for an 8-hour adventure to the Farallon Islands and beyond. GGAS President Alan Hopkins will be the group leader.

The Farallon Islands are home to nearly 200,000 nesting seabirds. We will look over the colonies of Common Murres, Pigeon Guillemot, and Brandt's Cormorants for Tufted Puffins. On most Bay Area pelagic

trips, the puffins can be difficult to find. On the Farrallones, the birds are visiting their nesting areas and are almost guaranteed. While we are cruising around the islands, we will also have an opportunity to see Elephant Seals, Stellar's and California sea lions, and Harbor Seals.

After viewing the islands, weather permitting, we will head west to the edge of the continental shelf, where we will search for deep-water seabirds. On last year's Farallon trip, we spotted Black-footed Albatross, Northern Fulmar, Pink-footed Shearwater, Buller's Shearwater, Ashy Storm-Petrel, Sabine's Gull, and Rhinoceros Auklets. Cetaceans

were represented by Humpback Whale, Dall's Porpoise, and Common and Northern Right-Whale dolphins.

These trips will sell out, so make sure to get your reservation check to Shearwater Journeys early!

For more information, please call Alan Hopkins at (415) 664-0983. (Do not call Shearwater Journeys.)

To register, send a check noting that you are a GGAS member, your phone number, and a self-addressed stamped envelope to:

Shearwater Journeys
P.O. Box 190
Hollister, CA 95024

New Explainers' Program at Heron Colony in Golden Gate Park

Since 1993, Great Blue Herons have been nesting at Stow Lake in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park. The heron colony is highly visible and provides a remarkable opportunity for children and adults to observe these birds as they raise their young.

To inform the public about the colony, Golden Gate Audubon Society is sponsoring a new program: The Heron Explainers' Project at Stow Lake. The project—directed by Nancy DeStefanis—trains high school interns from the California Academy of Sciences to staff an information booth at Stow Lake. The explainers will be on site at the colony to draw

visitors' attention to the herons, answer questions, and operate spotting scopes for folks to better observe the daily activities of the parent birds and chicks.

The program runs on Saturdays, June 3, 10, 17, and 24, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The booth is located on the path near the 1893 stone bridge, a short walk from the boathouse at Stow Lake.

Come out to Stow Lake and observe these beautiful and charismatic birds; bring a picnic and dine with the heron chicks!



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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

As a member of National Audubon Society, you are automatically enrolled in the local chapter, Golden Gate Audubon Society. Chapter benefits include receipt of *The Gull*, access to field trips and programs, and the opportunity to volunteer. Call the office if you have any questions.

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